

Marked-Up Version Of Amended Claim

7. (amended) A method of operating a call processing system to handle a call placed to a called number from a caller having a caller number, the method comprising:

receiving call set-up signaling for the call;

prior to service discrimination, processing the called number from the call set-up signaling to determine if the called number is toll-free [caller number should be checked in a validation table to determine if the call should be allowed];

if the called number is not toll-free [caller number should be checked in the validation table], then checking the caller number in a [the] validation table to determine if the call should be allowed;

if the call should be allowed based on the validation table, then processing the called number to select a route for the call;

if the called number is toll-free [caller number should not be checked in the validation table], then processing the called number to select the route for the call without checking the caller number in the validation table;

after selecting the route for the call, generating and transferring a message indicating the route selected for the call.

Remarks

Claims 7-9 were pending and rejected. Claim 7 has been amended. Claim 9 has been cancelled. Applicants respectfully request allowance of claims 7-8.

Claims 7-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent 5,563,933 (August). Claim 7 has been amended to clearly distinguish August. Claim 7 now requires processing the called number to select the route for the call without checking the caller number in a validation table if the called number is toll-free. In contrast, August clearly teaches caller number validation if the called number is toll-free. Thus, August performs caller validation on toll-free calls, but the invention eliminates caller validation on toll-free calls.

Importantly, August teaches the use of IXC switch 105 to handle calls. On POTS calls (for example a call to 1-703-305-2360), IXC switch 105 does not typically query database 131 for number translation. In order to block POTS calls from non-paying customers, IXC switch 105 would typically check the caller number in its own validation database before allowing the call (IXC switch 105 cannot rely on database 131 for caller validation because there is no query). Even if IXC switch 105 queries database 131 for number translation, IXC switch 105 typically still performs caller number validation. There is no teaching in August for IXC switch 105 to omit caller validation for toll-free numbers. Thus in August, both IXC switch 105 and database 131 perform caller validation on toll-free calls.

Applicants submit that there are numerous additional reasons in support of patentability, but that such reasons are moot in light of the above remarks and are omitted in the interests of brevity. Applicants respectfully request allowance of claims 7-8.



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